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TO: Montana School Administrators
FROM: Linda Vrooman Peterson, Administrator
Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division
SUBJECT: 2014-15 Montana Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

This annual letter provides information to school administrators about the federal highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for new-to-the-profession and experienced elementary and secondary teachers teaching core academic subject classes. The information is not new, but is provided as a refresher of what school administrators need to know about the federal HQT requirements and the applicable state standards adopted by the Board of Public Education (BPE).

Teaching Requirements

To fulfill BPE requirements, every teacher teaching in Montana accredited schools must be licensed, endorsed, and appropriately assigned. To meet the federal HQT requirements, teachers must also demonstrate content knowledge prior to teaching core academic subject classes.

Core Academic Subjects

The **core academic subjects**, as defined by the ESEA, include: English, reading, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, and physical science), civics and government, economics, history, geography, world languages, visual arts, and elementary curriculum.

Elementary Education

K-8 Elementary teachers new-to-the-profession must pass the PRAXIS II Elementary Content Knowledge Test (0014 paper test or 5014 computer-based test) prior to being assigned to teach the elementary curriculum. (Teachers who complete a Montana accredited educator preparation program meet this requirement.)

K-8 Elementary teachers who hold a Class 5 Alternative License must pass the PRAXIS II Elementary Content Knowledge test (0014/5014) prior to teaching the elementary curriculum. (Teachers who complete a Montana accredited educator preparation program meet this requirement.)

Secondary and K-12 Education

Experienced secondary (Grades 5-12), K-12 visual arts, and K-12 special education teachers, and Title I teachers teaching core academic subjects must meet High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) requirements, or must pass the appropriate PRAXIS II content knowledge test prior to teaching core academic subjects.

Experienced teachers with a secondary major, course work equivalent to a major, or an advanced degree in a core academic subject meet the federal HQT requirements and are not required, for HQT purposes, to pass a subject area test. (Teachers who complete a Montana accredited educator preparation program meet this requirement by passing the appropriate PRAXIS II content knowledge test.)

Teaching Minors

Elementary and secondary teachers with a minor in a core academic subject must pass the applicable PRAXIS II content knowledge test prior to teaching a core academic subject. (Teachers who complete a Montana accredited educator preparation program meet this requirement.)

Teachers Adding Endorsements

Licensed teachers adding an endorsement must complete either the major or minor program of study and pass the appropriate PRAXIS II content knowledge test. (Teachers who complete a Montana accredited educator preparation program meet this requirement.)

School District Responsibility

Districts are responsible to employ teachers who are licensed, endorsed, and appropriately assigned. Montana districts must also ensure that 100 percent of the teachers teaching core academic subjects meet the federal HQT requirements, which include demonstrating content knowledge prior to teaching core academic subjects. School district administrators are responsible to determine annually the HQT status for every teacher teaching core academic subjects. The school district must complete the appropriate HQT Status Determination forms; retain the completed forms for the district records; and report HQT status to the OPI. Complete forms for all teachers teaching core academic subject classes and for a teacher where a change in teaching assignment or where changes to the teacher's HQT status may exist. The [HQT Status Determination Forms](#) are available here.

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